



State Representative

# HANS DUNSHEE

39th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

## REPORT

### Working for Working Families — The 1997 Session Low Down

Well, the legislative session is over and I would like to take a moment to report on what was actually accomplished.

Some have called this session a “rousing success.” Others have called it the “do-nothing” Legislature. I call it the “mixed up” legislature. With all the problems affecting working families in our state, it seems interesting to me the majority party saw fit to continue business as usual. They chose to overlook the problems challenging many families in our community. We had opportunities to significantly reduce taxes on working families, make health insurance more affordable, overhaul campaign spending, improve public education and work on solving traffic problems, such as SR-522 out of Monroe.

Unfortunately, those in the majority chose not to address these problems. Instead, they worked on giving tax breaks to special interests while ignoring the needs of working families. They made us waste time considering cutting up Snohomish County rather than spend time cutting down class sizes. They tried to take away property rights by placing disruptive gravel quarries near our homes while backing away from helping unemployed rural workers to find new jobs.

I am hopeful that we can reverse these trends next session. We must turn our focus to helping working families by:

- Making our tax system more fair.
- Providing educational opportunities for adults and their children.
- Improving the quality of life for all citizens.
- Making government work more effectively and efficiently for all citizens.

Please call, write or drop by the district office at 108 Union St. in Snohomish should you have any questions or concerns on legislative matters. My office belongs to the hard-working people of the 39th District and the door is always open.

Sincerely,

**Rep. Hans Dunshee**  
335 John L. O'Brien Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

**E-mail:** dunshee\_ha@leg.wa.gov  
**Legislative Homepage:** <http://www.leg.wa.gov>  
**Legislative Hotline:** 1-800-562-6000

Please join me for town hall meetings:

July 15 - LAKE STEVENS Sr. Center	5:00-7:00
July 16 - DARRINGTON Community Center	5:00-7:00
July 17 - SULTAN Dutch Cup Restaurant	5:00-7:00

# Representative HANS DUNSHEE

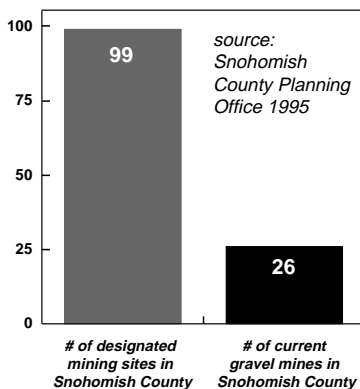
## What did the Legislature do for you!

### The Good

#### The Gravel Wars

The victory in the gravel wars in Olympia can be directly attributed to the hard work of people in Snohomish County. The phone calls, letters and local perseverance helped me convince legislators and the Governor that bills such as **SB5434** and **HB1472** were bad for all communities by infringing on the rights of homeowners and families.

Although we need long-term sources of gravel to expand and improve our local economy, these measures were



designed to short-circuit local land-use planning solely to benefit gravel quarry operators. We all need to work together to come up with a fair and equitable solution for everyone.

Snohomish County is now going through the quarry-site designation process.

#### “New Counties”

A lot of people have worked long hours trying to clarify county secession procedures so everyone affected would have an equal voice on this contentious issue. Unfortunately, those hoping to carve up Snohomish County were not satisfied and tried to shove their special interest bills through the Legislature. In the end, reasonable legislators said, “NO.”

#### Youth Crime and Violence

After years of debate and overheated rhetoric, the Legislature finally agreed on tough, new measures to combat the rise of juvenile crime. The new law guarantees 16 and 17-year olds accused of committing violent crimes will face the consequences of the adult prison system while allowing judges discretion when dealing with teenagers without long criminal histories. This proposal represents a true bipartisan effort involving House Democrats and Senate Republicans.

#### Welfare to Work

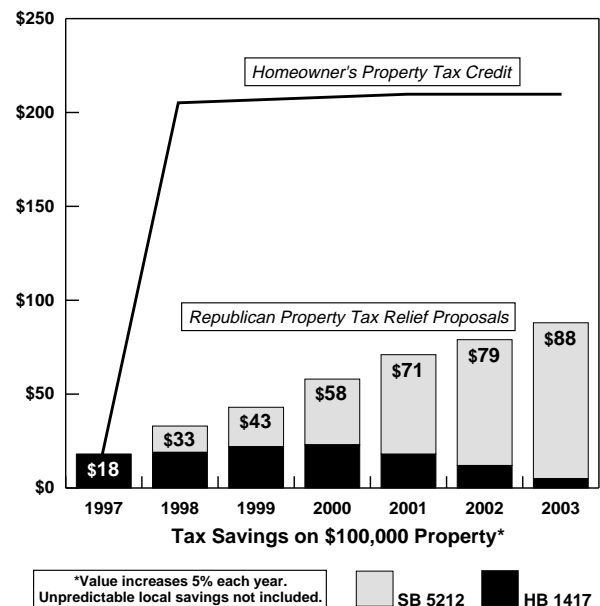
The proposal revamps our state’s welfare program, placing an emphasis on work and community service. It places

time limits on how long a person can receive public assistance. Finally, the measure provides a credible road map helping people to get off and stay off welfare, thereby ending a cycle of dependency. I supported and voted for these and other tough, but fair provisions overhauling welfare when the Governor’s welfare bill was on the House floor.

### The Semi-bad

#### Property Taxes

The idea of lowering property taxes was right on target, but the Legislature’s aim was a little off the mark. Instead of helping middle-income families, the Legislature simply helped the rich get richer. When it came to cutting property taxes, the majority party insisted on giving the owner of a \$100,000 home about an additional \$13 in savings next year while giving billionaires thousands. This year, Paul Allen had his property taxes reduced by about \$11,000. The matter will be decided this November at the polls. As an alternative, I proposed the Homeowner’s Property Tax Credit. Each and every homeowner would have had their property taxes reduced by up to \$205 regardless of income. Unfortunately, wealthy interests won. Working families lost.



The fair thing, of course, would have been to put both proposals on the ballot. Instead, like an old-style Soviet election, you get only one choice. Nevertheless, I will continue to fight for tax fairness for seniors and middle-income families struggling to make ends meet.

#### Business Taxes

Again, the idea of lower taxes was a good target, but the Legislature kept missing the mark. In rolling back the

# The 1997 Session Low Down

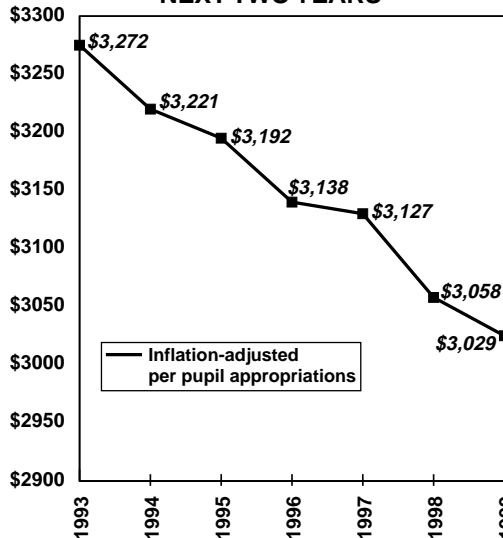
business and occupation tax on services, the Legislature chose to give 70% of the tax break to companies making up the top 15% in the sector. The tax break was only slightly more equitable than two years ago, when lawmakers chose to give 92% of all tax breaks to large corporate special interests.

The Republican majority refused to consider **HB 1218**, which I co-sponsored, targeting any B&O tax rollback to small businesses. We need to help all businesses. But I think the local store owner down the street needs more help than the multi-partnered law firm with posh offices in a Seattle skyscraper.

## Improving Education

While the total dollars went up because of increases in population, the actual amount spent per child continued to decline. Yes, the Legislature set aside money for education "technology." While buying new computers for classrooms is great, schools still need trained teachers to instruct

**SCHOOL FUNDING HAS DROPPED IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS — AND WILL CONTINUE TO DROP IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS**



students in using the equipment, along with manageable class sizes providing conducive learning spaces. We must get serious about improving the education of our children today so they are ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

## The Just Plain Ugly

Unfortunately, a number of simply bad measures made it through this past session.

## Slashing the Criminal Diversion Program

Under the program run by the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, non-violent offenders would appear before a panel of ordinary citizens to receive their sentence. The program succeeded in giving a local community the tools it needed to help break the cycle of crime before it got started. Republican budget cutters drastically slashed the

program, completely ignoring how much it would have saved taxpayers in the future.

## Cutting Assistance to Displaced Rural Workers

On the last day of session, after giving millions of dollars in tax breaks to wealthy special interests, the Republican majority dramatically slashed the number of displaced workers eligible for extended unemployment benefits in timber communities such as Darrington, Granite Falls and Gold Bar. This successful program was established in 1991 with bi-partisan support. It gave thousands of people hope, along with the chance to get back on their feet. This was a truly shameful ending to the 1997 session.

**In order to better represent you and the 39th Legislative District, I hope you will take a few moments to answer and return the following questionnaire.**

**Again, please feel free to contact me with any legislative concerns you may have.**

1. Given the fact per capita state education spending, when adjusted for inflation, has been dropping since the budget crisis year of 1993, are we spending:

- ☐ a) too little on public education?
- ☐ b) too much on public education?
- ☐ c) about the right amount?

2. Should the legislature focus more on providing across-the-board tax cuts, which primarily benefit the business sector or

- ☐ a) fully fund successful education initiatives
- ☐ b) provide more in-home health and other services for senior citizens
- ☐ c) improve our transportation infrastructure
- ☐ d) Should focus on across-the-board tax cuts
- ☐ e) Target tax cut to middle-class families and seniors

3. Given a choice of more funding for education and social services, such as senior chore help, or, tax cuts -which would you choose?

Tax cuts  More Funding

4. Do you have any ideas for a tax cut targeted at middle-class families and/or seniors?

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Rep. Hans Dunshee  
108 Union St.  
Snohomish, WA 98290

5. Currently, there is debate over discrimination against people in the workplace who are homosexual. Should the Legislature ban job discrimination against people who are homosexual?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you believe our environmental laws are:

\_\_\_\_\_ Too strong?

\_\_\_\_\_ Not strong enough?

\_\_\_\_\_ About right?

7. Given that a person with two children working full time at Washington's current minimum wage of \$4.90 an hour still earns below the poverty level, should the state raise its minimum wage?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. Should growth be managed statewide to preserve our quality of life even if some people will not be able to subdivide and develop their land?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9. Should wetland and streams be protected to protect wildlife and fish populations even if it restricts development of some properties?

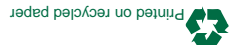
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

10. What was your perception of the 1997 legislative session? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Further Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Representative  
Hans Dunshee

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